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ABSTRACT

This document comprises the proceedings of a 1987 symposium in Stockholm, Sweden, sponsored by the Council for Cultural Cooperation (CDCC) of the Council for Europe on the implementation of innovation in primary education at the local level. Aims of the symposium were to investigate means for coordinating initiatives in innovation at the national, regional, and local levels, and to examine how innovation at the local level could be stimulated by central initiatives. The first section summarizes opening addresses by Professor Sixten Marklund (University of Stockholm) and Mr. Erland Ringborg, director-general of Sweden's National Board of Education. Subsequent proceedings summarize discussions of the development strategy for primary-level innovation in Sweden, including (1) regional measures and cooperation between the National Board of Education and the County Education Committees; (2) development at local school and municipal level; (3) evaluation of the junior school project; (4) innovation at the local level within a decentralised and centralised system; (5) partnership between preprimary school education and schools; and (6) language learning at primary school. The next section documents visits by the delegates to schools in the Stockholm area to discuss with teachers their participation in the primary school development program. The visits undertaken by six separate working groups are summarized, along with evaluation of findings. The final section summarizes recent developments in school-based innovation in Sweden, along with concluding remarks by Mr. Bengt Goransson, minister for cultural affairs and comprehensive schools. Appended is the conference program and a list of participants. (TE)

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"Innovation in primary education"

Symposium on "The implementation of innovation in primary education at the local level"

Hässelby Slott (Stockholm)
27-30 April 1987

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COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL CO-OPERATION (CDCC)

Project No. 8

"Innovation in primary education"

Symposium

on

"THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL"

Hässelby Slott, Stockholm (Sweden)
27-30 April 1987

Report written and compiled by
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1. Introduction: Aims of the Symposium

Since 1982, the main item in the school programme of the Council of Europe's Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) has been a project on 'Innovation in Primary Education'. The project has concerned itself with the need for the primary school to reconsider its position and role in society, in the light of the profound and rapid changes which are at present facing European societies and in order to take account of the improved knowledge of child development. The project has examined how this important adjustment can best be brought about and has recognised the need for school systems at all levels to work more closely together in bringing about successful innovation.

A previous symposium held in Noordwijk, Netherlands, reviewed approaches to problems in implementation of large-scale innovation (Doc. DECS/EGT (85) 16). This final seminar, held in Stockholm attempted to analyse the processes involved when innovation takes place at local level. The symposium sought to look at strategies for the implementation of innovation in primary education and in particular:

1. to investigate means for co-ordinating initiatives in innovation at national, regional and local level;

2. to examine in particular how the initiation of innovation at the local level could be stimulated by central initiatives.

2. Opening of the symposium

The symposium was opened by the Chairman, Professor Sixten Marklund, Professor of Pedagogics at the University of Stockholm. Professor Marklund extended a warm welcome to the delegates from member states of CDCC and to the observers from other countries and institutions. He expressed a strong conviction that the subject of this seminar was of critical importance for the future education of all children. Professor Marklund then went on to introduce the pupils of the Municipal School of Music in Stockholm who then provided a musical welcome.

The symposium was then formally opened by Mr Erland Ringborg, Director-General of the National Board of Education. Mr Ringborg also extended a welcome to the delegates on behalf of the Swedish authorities and then provided a brief summary of Sweden's education system.

Parliament (the Riksdag) had responsibility for deciding the form that the education system took and also provided goals and guidelines by which the schools were expected to operate. Through the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs the Government issued regulations, provided finance and gave commissions to the National Board of Education. Together with the local education committees the National Board was responsible for long-term planning, development and co-ordination of these educational programmes to ensure that the goals and guidelines laid down by the Parliament were complied with. The National Board also provided data on which the Government and Parliament could base future policy.

The local education authorities were appointed by the municipal councils which decided on local education spending. The local authority decided how resources were allocated between different schools and had responsibility for ensuring that school work was conducted in accordance with the policy laid down by Central Government.

Primary schooling begins at the age of seven but all municipalities were obliged by law to provide six year olds with three hours' pre-school education a day. Pre-school education, however, was administered by the National Board of Health and Welfare and through the social welfare committees at municipal level. The Board distributed state grants to municipalities which covered approximately half of the costs of these pre-school activities. In addition to day nurseries and play school there were leisure centres for children in the lower grades of school whose parents were gainfully employed or were studying. Children could come to these centres during the morning and evening outside school hours. They could also come to the centre in their spare time and during the holiday periods.

3. Background to the Swedish Primary Education Development Project

3.1 Outline of the development strategy for innovation of primary level in Sweden

Mr Peter Honeth, Assistant Under-Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs then outlined governmental strategy for reform. Over the last 30 years the school system had changed dramatically from one where after seven years of compulsory schooling only a small proportion of pupils stayed on, to the present where all pupils had nine years of compulsory schooling and nearly 90% of students stayed on after the age of 16. The system was judged to be successful. Pupils received a sound grounding in basic knowledge and most of them worked diligently. Only a small proportion of the population now attended schools to which they could not travel daily from their home.

Nevertheless, some problems still remained to be solved. Up to the present time much of the reform programme had been directed to the reorganisation and distribution of education but the present policy was more concerned with pedagogy because it would seem that there remained a small but persistent group of students who were not positively motivated by the current methods of teaching which operate in many schools.

The Government recognised that changes in pedagogy cannot be brought about by national directive since even in a centralised system, such as Sweden's, it was not possible to lay down pedagogy in sufficient detail. More importantly a national initiative of this kind would run contrary to a well-respected principle that allowed teachers in Sweden to have responsibility for their own teaching.

In seeking to promote local innovation which would address itself successfully to changing the attitudes of existing teachers in the use of traditional pedagogic methods, the Government faced several problems. These were outlined by Mr Honeth as follows:

(i) There was a need to create a positive attitude in teachers to the Government's reforms since there was a danger that teachers would see such initiatives as attempts by the central authority to control their freedom. Teachers had to feel that they were making an important contribution to the country's future and that the value of their work and of their schools was appreciated by the community.

(ii) There was a need to find ways of retaining and strengthening pedagogic freedom of teachers while encouraging the feeling that, as professionals, they were part of a system which should try to arrive at a consensus on a number of major issues.

(iii) There was a need to avoid conflict. Changes should not take place too quickly without taking account of the reservations of teachers to the proposed changes. The Government therefore had to limit its ambitions for change and strike a balance between attempting to promote some change while at the same time allowing teachers to move at their own pace towards these new goals.

(iv) There was still considerable ambiguity in the definition of leadership roles both at national, regional and school level. The Government needed to provide a clearer specification of responsibility at various levels within the system, particularly between the principal and the staff in schools. This raised important questions about the traditional freedoms of teachers to have responsibility for their own classrooms.

(v) Traditionally, teacher education had cut itself off from the school system. There was a need to reform teacher training programmes so that they became a strategic factor within the innovation process. Of more importance was the need to link in-service work more closely to national goals.

(vi) During the earlier periods of reform it was generally assumed that because the system appeared to be working successfully, particularly in terms of staying-on rates at school, there was no need to have a close evaluation of existing practice. How, however, there was a need for more evaluation within the school system. Schools needed to demonstrate both value for money to the public and to ensure that the more complex goals which were now the concern of the reform movement were, in part, at least, being achieved.

The main strategy of the Government, therefore, in bringing about these reforms was to devise a new system of resourcing in-service. In the past, about 3% of Government funding to the municipalities was earmarked for the development work but the nature of this work was left unspecified. As a result, although interesting initiatives were undertaken many had little relation to the Government's major objectives of the reform programme. The Government, therefore, had set aside a sum of money for development work in primary education. This money was distributed to the regional authorities (the county education committees). Acceptable projects had to demonstrate that either:

(i) the development introduced new teaching methods or

(ii) the development fostered greater continuity between the pre-primary and the primary school.

Schools could bid for small additional resources providing they produced a development scheme and this scheme fitted in with the general guidelines. The regional authority decided between competing claims for these additional resources.

This programme marked a radical departure from the traditional method of resourcing in-service where the funds provided by Central Government were distributed to all schools and all schools expected to receive some money as of right. Under the new strategy schools only received this extra resource if they deserved it and wished it. It was hoped that schools who were successful because of their own initiative would have much greater positive attitudes towards change and that, as a result, there would be less danger of potential conflict between Central Government and the local schools. A similar strategy, involving approximately half of the sums spent on the primary education development programme, was allocated to developments in cultural adaption.

Mr Honeth then tabled a short paper by Dr Andrae Thelin setting out more details of the development strategy for primary level education in Sweden.

In the paper, Dr Thelin put forward reasons why, during the last few years in Sweden, more and more attention has been paid to education at primary level (grades 1-3). Problems like restlessness, anxiety and lack of concentration among the pupils, even the beginners, now occur more frequently. In 1981, for example, the Swedish Union of Teachers reported that teachers at the primary level faced many difficulties. A new centrally issued curriculum for compulsory school, introduced in 1980, gave teachers many opportunities of co-operating with other persons within and outside school and of initiating development work to help children with special needs. This new curriculum reflected the current tendency in Swedish education to increase the influence of the local education authorities and to give more responsibility to the local schools.

In order to meet the demands of primary school teachers - strongly reflected in the mass media debates - the Swedish Riksdag decided in 1983 to support development work at the primary level of compulsory school during a four-year period. Thirty million Swedish crowns (3.7 million dollars) a year were allocated for this purpose.

Since 1983 a considerable part of the total amount: 28 million Swedish crowns a year, has been distributed by the 24 state county administrations to local community projects initiated by teachers. 1.5 million Swedish crowns have been jointly distributed by the National Board of Education and the National Board of Health and Welfare to projects dealing with general problems of co-ordinating pre-primary and primary schools. Finally, 500,000 Swedish crowns a year have been reserved for evaluating these various activities and this will continue until 1990.

As from the autumn of 1987, no specific resources have been reserved for the primary level (grades 1-3). The Government has suggested, however, that grades 4-6 should be supported during the next two years. In keeping with the Government's intentions, the next stage of the project will be organised along the same lines as the primary level project. The Minister of Education has underlined the desirability of giving priority to projects calculated to develop the teaching of Swedish and mathematics.

3.2 Secretariat statement

The Head of the School of Education Division, Ms Giulia Podestà, then closed the opening session by expressing, on behalf of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the Council's thanks to the Swedish Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs and to the National Board of Education, for hosting the symposium. Ms Podestà expressed warm appreciation for Mr Ringborg's approach to the Council of Europe's mission and thanked Mr Honeth for providing the symposium with an extremely clear picture and critical analysis of the main goals and trends of Swedish school policy.

Ms Podestà endorsed Professor Marklund's opening remarks on the importance of the symposium. It was the last opportunity for governments, before the final conference of the project, to make suggestions that they wished to be reflected in the final report and to give guidelines on the implementation, at national level, of the principles enshrined in the text issued within the framework of the project, especially on issues concerned with continuity between the different levels of education and the paramount importance of initial and in-service training for teachers. In the near future governments would also need to consider whether the Council for Cultural Co-operation should embark on another project on primary education in order to complete the study of the themes listed at the original Vaduz conference (DECS/EGT (83) 64).

4. Summary of main lectures

4.1 Regional measures and co-operation between the National Board of Education and the County Education Committees

Ms Ingrid Sörlin Principal Administrative Officer, of the Varmland County Education Committee explained how co-operation between the national and local administrative bodies operated with respect to the developments at primary level. Varmland, a sparsely populated rural county, received some £80,000 of the £3 million allocated annually by Parliament between the period 1983 and 1987. The county had severe unemployment problems following rationalisation in the iron and steel industries. There had been a dwindling school population leading to the need to vertically group classes and unemployment had also brought strains in family life because many men now travelled away from home to find work and returned only at weekends.

Four main types of development projects were identified:

(i) co-operation between primary education and school;

(ii) creative activities;

(iii) the study of different working methods for mixed age groups;

(iv) family participation in schools.

Over the four years some 25 projects had been supported each year. The County Education Committee had tried to encourage different types of projects and to ensure that, as far as possible, the activities were geographically distributed between different municipalities in the county. Whenever possible the Education Committee selected those projects which required close collaboration between various participants within the school system.

Co-operation between pre-primary and ptimary school (35 projects)

There had been 35 projects concerned with co-operation between pre-primary and primary school. In the final year the number declined somewhat because the schemes seemed to have continued to operate under their own momentum. Most of the schemes involved co-operation and transfer between staff in the pre-primary and the primary school. Traditionally, because child care and schooling come under different authorities, there had been little contact between staff of the two schools, even though they were often on the same site. Numerous activities involving children and staff working together, such as cooking, going on outings, performing plays, had been suggested. Pre-primary induction courses to prepare children for transfer to the primary school were also a frequent activity. A major aim in all these activities was to develop a shared approach to the teaching of children so that pupils when they transferred from pre-primary school to primary school would present fewer problems.

Creative activities (45 projects)

Much of the development work in this area resulted from the influence of Professor Marianne Frostig concerning mental and physical development through motor training. The local University College of Karlstad also provided in-service courses on the same themes. All these projects essentially involved curriculum development with various materials, often based on a local craft tradition, but there had been integrated topics around themes of 'reality and imagination' involving the study of painting and music and also language development projects around themes such as 'talking about books', 'poems for the day' and 'write your own book'.

Development of new working methods with mixed aged groups (18 projects)

Eighteen projects had concerned themselves with the various factors which could help to make mixed aged classes more effective. Such studies had involved teams of teachers working together, older pupils taking responsibility for younger ones in the class, the development of democratic styles of teaching, investigative approaches to mathematics and to environmental studies, designed to transform the teacher/pupil relationship.

Family participation (5 projects)

Here only five projects had been undertaken. In Sweden there was no tradition of parental involvement in schools and, as in other countries, there have been anxieties among the teacher unions lest parents be used as cheap labour. These few projects, however, appeared to have had very positive effects. Classes had been organised into family groups, parents and indeed grandparents had supplemented the teacher's knowledge by their experience in widely varying occupational spheres. Negative reactions of parents to small-scale innovation in the schools had also appeared to be less widespread within the project schools.

Dissemination

The County Education Committee had been anxious to disseminate the experience gained from these various projects and had organised in-service days and conferences to report the results. These activities were well covered in the local media. In addition there was now a joint consultation group consisting of National Board of Education representatives and nominated representatives from several County Education Committees which exchanged and disseminated successful innovation. These groups made field trips to see various projects as part of this transmission of useful experience and feedback to the National Board.

4.2 Development at local school and municipal level

Mr Uno TUVESSON, head-teacher of the Fajans in the municipality of Falkenberg, described the innovation which had taken place in one of his schools (the school is one of Project No. 8's contact). The school chose to take, as the point of departure, the need to provide continuity and security for the children from their early years to the end of intermediate level (12 years of age). To do this they brought the various activities for all children of this age under one roof rather than continue with the more normal practice where, because different bodies administer child care and compulsory schooling, activities were, for the most part, conducted in separate buildings with quite different conditions. As a result, parents with more than one child had to organise themselves so as to leave and to collect their children at different places and at different times.

The school was re-organised and all activities divided between three department colours. Each school department was made up of one third of all children in the day nursery, playschool, leisure centre and junior and intermediate levels. Thus, a child of one year of age who started day nursery in a red department remained in that group until the end of his intermediate schooling. The organisation operated with mixed age classes in school and mixed aged sibling groups in the pre-primary schools. There were three ages or years per class. Although pre-primary school and primary school have separate premises they did have days of working together. The school felt that this organisation has proved to have many advantages. In each class there were smaller numbers starting each year (one third beginners) and these could learn from older classmates. There were greater opportunities for individualisation of the learning although teachers had to spend more time in the preparation of teaching materials.

In the second half of this talk, Ms Kerstin Allgulander, an Advisor, analysed the roles of the various actors in the innovation process. Head-teachers had important roles as listeners, facilitators and mediators in respect of difficulties which could arise when some teachers were more interested in innovation than others. Teachers in the schools tended to adopt two different approaches when faced with the need to innovate. One approach, often used by those teachers who had practised individualisation previously, was to make major changes of classroom organisation, while those who were learning to use new approaches for the first time, tended to take a more gradual approach, trying out a new topic each week so that they 'learned on the job'.

Pupils had to learn new ways of working. They needed to co-operate with each other more and to plan and pace their own work. Parents were, however, a major constraint on innovation of this kind. Although many parents had a positive attitude to school they preferred to have their children taught in the same way as they were, with less emphasis on experimentation and teachers marking exercise books right or wrong rather than encouraging children to be more creative. An announcement of a developmental project was not always popular in that some parents were unhappy about their children being 'experimented upon'.

Ms Allgulander reported that in some schools these obstacles were being overcome. These schools recognised that parents were unsure of their role in the new learning situation. It was noticeable that those schools which attempted to involve parents were less likely to meet with resistance to innovation. Previously there had been no tradition of parental involvement but now some schools were holding working evenings in which the new teaching methods were explained and where parents helped to produce the materials required for individualised working. Some schools were also beginning to bring parents into the classroom where they could assist the teachers for one day per week. These developments were much more common in the junior school.

4.3 Evaluation of the junior school project

Dr. Inger Andersson presented a short summary of the evaluation work associated with the junior school project. The nature of the project with its emphasis on local-based innovation demanded that evaluation should be carried out at various levels, locally, regionally and centrally. The central evaluation was the responsibility of the National Board of Education which commissioned the evaluation study from the Department of Education at Umea University. The evaluative model used was termed 'theoretically-based evaluation' and had been developed by Professor Sigbrit Franke-Wikberg. This approach rejected the notion that in any evaluation the declared objectives of the innovation could be 'taken for granted' as a departure point which defined the nature of the study. Nor could the evaluator's role be neutral since the kinds of information collected and the interpretation of this information had to be dependent on the evaluator's own perspectives. Thus, a most important stage in the work of the junior level drive evaluation was for the researchers to make public the theoretical frame of reference around which the study was built. In this case the appropriate interpretive framework was a societal one and the project had studied these effects at central, regional and local level.

Among the data collected were the ways in which the official decisions governing the project had been arrived at and formulated, their funding by the County Education Committees and their implementation at local level as concrete project activities. Studies had concentrated on illuminating issues such as decentralisation, project selection, resource allocation and development work. Both quantitative and qualitative methods had been used. The study attempted not only to describe the outcome of the junior level drive but also to try to understand and explain it. Work had taken place throughout the four-year period and the final report would appear in January 1988.

Preliminary published results concentrated on the process of selection of projects since on every occasion when applications had been invited, the number of project suggestions submitted by schools and the amount of funding requested had substantially exceeded available resources. In each instance the local education authority in each municipality had carried out the initial selection of projects, the final selection being made by the County Education Committee which also allocated resources. The evaluation study showed that the principles of allocation varied considerably. Some County Education Committees concentrated on a few major projects while others distributed the money fairly evenly between the applications received from the different municipalities.

During the four-year period the trend had developed for individual projects to receive a smaller proportion of fundings so that the number of projects overall had increased. There was also a greater awareness of the need to spread the innovation as widely as possible so that there was now a much more even distribution of project resources across the 282 participating municipalities. The role of the County Education Committees in the selection of projects had been the major factor in controlling the specific content of project activities. This, in turn, determined the nature of the in-service which had been organised to train teachers with respect to the new methods.

The analysis of projects carried out in schools showed that in the first two years co-operation between pre-primary school and junior level was the dominant field, ranging from such activities as exchange visits of personnel to closer integration of activities between systems. In the current year the number of these projects had fallen considerably to be replaced by an increasing number attempting greater co-operation between the junior and intermediate levels of schooling. Development of working methods was another main field where interest had grown. Among the projects included under this category were experimental working methods, particularly concerned with non-graded, vertically integrated teaching. There had been a growing interest in team teaching as an effective way of coping with mixed age classes.

Specific case studies had been carried out on nine projects covering the various categories of development. The material from these field studies consisted of diary notes, observation and interviews. Preliminary results showed that no two schools were alike in the ways in which the innovation took place. Further studies were planned to follow up the innovation after the initial funding was withdrawn.

There was some evidence to suggest that many of the initiatives were already planned or had started before the beginning of the project and were therefore continuing after it had been 'officially' completed. Thus, the development grants provided for the 'junior level drive' represent a critical phase in the development work carried out in the school.

The interview material collected also provided information about constraints affecting these local initiatives. Frequently difficulties were attributed to out-of-school conditions. There was also evidence, however, that many constraints result from problems within the school, particularly when discussion about teaching methods gave rise to certain conflicts and differences of opinion.

4.4 Innovation at local level within a decentralised and centralised system

Ms Winnie Grønsved described the ways in which a decentralised system, such as the one which exists in Denmark, supported innovation at local level. School development work was supported by the Danish Government's Board of Educational Development. The Board granted financial support for writing and printing reports and teachers received pay for the additional hours of work required to produce their report. The Board made available consultants who co-operated with the teachers in compiling data and in writing the report itself. The reports were distributed widely throughout the country and could be borrowed from teaching-aid centres. The Board, on occasions, brought together a number of reports within a particular field to make a synthesis of the findings and to present them to the minister who might then use them as a basis for adjusting educational policy.

Projects tended to adopt three strategies of development. The first was a problem solving model in which a teacher or a group of teachers in a school attempted to solve a specific problem related to their practice. This was the most used approach. Alternatively a visionary model was sometimes employed where a teacher set out to improve practice although the existing situation was not seen as problematic. Lastly, there was a research-developmental approach in which researchers and teachers co-operated as part of a research initiative. Central authorities did not employ checks on teachers to see that they were carrying out the development and Ms Gronsved argued that this 'trust' was the most essential condition for the 'grass roots development' to be effective.

One of the main themes of development work over the last five years had been the development of project work in which pupils co-operated to solve problems 'in close relation to social reality' so that schools became open to society's influence. Teaching and learning emphasised a problem-solving orientation with active participation by pupils. Many of the development studies sought ways of increasing pupil participation or examined the ways in which the role of the teacher had to change to bring about such changes in pupil behaviour.

In addition to these initiatives between 10 and 20 times the sums provided centrally by the Board of Educational Development were allocated by local authorities to reward teachers for preparing work, developing teaching aids and materials, writing reports and attending courses. One

of the major advantages of this decentralised development work was that a great number of reforms had been introduced into schools in Denmark and most of these had been accepted without any opposition from those teachers who were required to implement the changes.

As a contrast to this way of working, M. Jean Michel Sivirine examined innovation within the French education system. M. Sivirine likened its organisation to that of a pyramid which was both vertical and hierarchical. Teachers communicated with the regional inspectors who were responsible for between two and three hundred teachers. These regional inspectors, in turn, communicated with the inspectors responsible for an academic department who in turn communicated with a smaller number of rectorates who had responsibility for a group of departments. The latter officials were directly responsible to the Ministry. The system was therefore not very suitable for developing local initiatives in that any action by a school would need to work through this administrative structure before finance could be released from the state which was responsible for 75% of all expenditure on education. The sheer size of the system meant that it was slow to change. There was also a tendency for each administrative level to believe that those above and below were unappreciative of the demands placed on a particular level. Hence, initiative was sometimes looked on suspiciously by those asked to pass it on to the next level of administration. In school a head-teacher could not always exert a major influence on innovation. Within the French system the head-teacher was a co-ordinator. Teachers in a school were appointed by the Department and head-teachers did not therefore recruit their own staff. The role of the head-teacher, however, was now being reconsidered.

For this reason innovation within the French system consisted of adapting the school system to meet external demands. The National Research Institute of Pedagogy initiated studies and made recommendations and this system sometimes ignored the localised effects of innovation on teachers. As no means of establishing horizontal links exist, except where like-minded teachers get together, there was no mechanism by which the primary teacher could influence innovation policy except through the union. One of the important values within the French system concerned equality of opportunity for all schools so that any innovation had to be capable of being generalised which in itself, therefore, was very costly. Two recent examples concerned the establishment of educational priority zones and the introduction of micro-computers into every primary school. Both these innovations had been the subject of case studies during Project No. 8. Generally, the innovation was presented to teachers by means of in-service courses.

In spite of the difficulties of innovating at local level within a very structured hierarchical system there was evidence that some positive results were achieved. For example, in setting up the educational priority zones schools were allowed some control of the money and could develop their own schemes. Although evaluation was difficult since there was no knowledge of the antecedent conditions, teachers agreed that pupil behaviour improved. School attendance increased and violence was

reduced. However, at the end of the project there were problems when the additional funding ceased. In contrast to the evidence presented in the Swedish study, where teachers continued to carry on the innovation, schools involved in the educational priority zone experiment argued that they were unable to maintain the innovation without the continuation of additional funding.

4.5 Partnership between pre-primary school education and schools

Dr. Gertrud Schyl-Bjurman summarised the main activities of the projects involving co-operation between pre-primary school and primary school. Because pre-primary school and primary school constitute two separate systems in Sweden there were different traditions. Pre-primary school education was based on developmental psychology while schools were mainly preoccupied with the psychology of learning. The emphasis on pre-primary school was therefore on the child's social and emotional development rather than on the cognitive aspects.

Although a number of small university colleges had programmes of 'co-ordinated studies' for training pre-primary school and compulsory school teachers, there were many structural factors which inhibited co-operation. Whereas the school curriculum, as laid down by Parliament, was compulsory, that for pre-primary school took the form of recommendations only so that municipal authorities had autonomy in framing educational programmes of their own. Pre-primary school staff were paid less than school teachers and had their own collective agreements on working hours and duties. These agreements did not match those for school teachers. Despite these difficulties patterns of co-operation had developed. It was now common practice for six year olds to be given the opportunity of paying one or more visits to the prospective school prior to transfer. Junior level teachers also visited pre-primary school institutions. Many municipalities organised joint in-service days for pre-primary school staff and junior level teachers.

More recently the school and pre-primary school committee which was set up in 1981 to study aspects of co-operation between the different levels had, in its 1985 report, argued for continuity of both content and working methods with a need, in the early years of junior school, for more activity and movement, a greater proportion of play, building and construction within the curriculum. The committee wished to see a greater emphasis on the use of the child's own experience in developing linguistic ability and greater attention to sensory activities, like drawing, painting, modelling, music and drama. In order for pre-primary school working methods to penetrate the junior level the committee recommended that pre-primary school teachers should also serve at junior level as co-teachers. In turn, pre-primary school education needed to be influenced by school working methods with a more equal balance struck between free play and structured activity. These activities should be begun when children reached the age of about four and should occupy two/three hours a day. The activities should be designed with reference to successive learning targets based on knowledge of the cognitive and social development processes. Children in the pre-primary school should now be taught to read. For children requiring special support, who had been integrated into pre-primary school education since 1975, the

committee recommended that the specialist resources required should be pooled between pre-primary schools and the junior schools so that they were deployed where they were needed most. In the next decade, therefore, great changes would take place in the levels of co-operation between pre-primary school and junior school as the community gradually came to understand the importance of these links.

4.6 Language learning at primary school

In the final lecture, Dr. Henning Johansson described an action research project in the northern most part of Sweden among the Saami reindeer breeders and the school system in the Torne valley. In recent years the conditions of the Swedish Saami population had changed. Only a small proportion now earned their living by breeding reindeer and the absence of other forms of occupation in the area had led to the break-up of family ties and cultural roots. With the decline in the nomadic life of the reindeer breeders their children now attended local schools which usually did not include any Saami cultural elements. The result was that these children tended to lose both their Saami language and their cultural identity. A major problem for these children was their repeated school failure. On national standardised tests they had repeatedly demonstrated under-achievement. This in turn reinforced their disadvantage in that on leaving school the Saami children lacked the qualifications to compete for jobs and admission to higher education.

The aim of the action research project was therefore to endeavour to reinforce socialisation among pupils so that they could develop their potential within the Swedish school system while relating this development to their own culture. The project attempted to help teachers to develop skills so that they could design their own multi-cultural teaching programme in co-operation with the parents and the local community. Teachers were expected to share ideas and experiences with one another in order to develop their confidence and skills as curriculum planners. A problem-solving approach was adopted with the researchers acting as consultants.

The results of the programme were evaluated using observations in and outside school, follow-up interviews with parents, pupils and teachers, and analysis of test results, reading habits and essays written by the pupils. Changes of role and behaviour were observed in all classes. Tests in mathematics and Swedish language were administered and small differences were recorded in favour of the experimental group when compared with another control group of pupils. Patterns of reading also differed in that the project pupils tended to read books about animals and nature whereas those in the control group read magazines and thrillers. The project children's essays, while realistic about the chances of full employment in the region, were much more optimistic than children in the control group. The conclusion, therefore, was that by providing the project children with an additional social dimension in their own cultural background and environment it was possible not only to raise standards but to improve attitudes and create a sense of identity.

4.7 Comments and discussion of the lectures

At the end of each plenary session opportunities were provided for delegates to comment on the lectures. Among the main concern of many speakers was the need to extend the participation of parents in primary schooling. It was noted that of the Swedish projects described by Ms Ingrid Sörlin, family participation had been the subject of innovation projects relatively infrequently. Some delegates also raised the question of the desirability of pupil participation in the innovation process but no firm conclusions were reached on this issue.

Considerable discussion arose from contrasting the styles of innovation described by Ms Grønsved in Denmark and that by M. Jean-Michel Sivirine as it operated in France. It was noted that many of the 'problem-solving' examples used to illustrate the Danish approach had to do with the development of resources or the revision of classroom organisation. More fundamental changes in pedagogy, as currently attempted by the Swedish junior drive programme, appeared to require some central direction. Set against this was the fact that by placing teachers at the centre of the innovation process negative reaction against innovation appeared to be overcome. Teachers also seemed prepared to continue with the innovation once the initial funding had ceased, unlike the innovation programmes described by M. Sivirine. Nevertheless, it was admitted that locally initiated innovations did give rise to inequalities in educational provision. Schools which volunteered to innovate received additional resources while those which either refused to participate or did not put forward a satisfactory scheme obtained no additional financial help. Recent studies in the United Kingdom suggested that within one local authority a policy of this kind could result in the resources of some schools differing by a factor of 10. Some overall monitoring and control was therefore necessary.

The report of the growing links between pre-primary school and the junior school was warmly welcomed by many delegates who wished to see greater continuity of teaching methods across different levels of schooling. It was generally agreed that within a more closely integrated system there were great benefits to be gained by children starting school at the earliest age possible. This view had been supported by numerous research studies.

Finally, the paper by Dr. Johansson, raised an important issue about teacher autonomy in matters of pedagogy. Dr. Johansson's study showed that children taught by one method improved their performance, yet many teachers in the control group, even when faced with this evidence, still argued that their own methods which appeared to discriminate against these children, were to be preferred. Delegates were unable to resolve this issue, recognising that placing pressure on teachers to use methods to which they were opposed would result in serious problems for the pupils. Head-teachers and those responsible for training had an important role to play in helping such teachers adapt to changes in pedagogy.

5. School visits

In carrying out visits to schools in the Stockholm area to discuss with teachers their participation in the primary school development programme, the delegates attempted to focus their attention upon some of the issues which formed the main themes of the final report of Project No. 8. Among these were:

(i) The role of the head/principal, particularly in the implementation of democratic procedures of consultation with staff involved in the development of various projects;

(ii) The manner of resolving any difficulties which arose.

(iii) The factors which made the participating teachers feel disposed towards the innovation.

(iv) The way in which resources were used.

(v) The kinds of evidence which schools collected in order to evaluate the success of the project.

(vi) The manner in which dissemination of the innovation was carried out both within and beyond the school.

(vii) The roles and influences of parents, pupils and local officials.

(viii) The positive and negative aspects of involving a consultant.

Not all of these eight themes were relevant to the innovation in each of the schools visited. Although, therefore, the extent to which these themes were discussed in the reports varied, important information was obtained and certain general conclusions based on this information were presented by the rapporteur in his final report.

5.1 WORKING GROUP 1

School visited: ALVIKSSKOLAN

Rapporteurs: MM. Jean-Bernard GICQUEL and Georges MAVROIDIS

School's characteristics

The school is situated near Stockholm centre and near the underground. It incorporates both the regular nine-year comprehensive school consisting of regular classes, special classes for the partially deaf and partially sighted and an upper secondary school (sixth form) for the partially deaf. The school has at present 460 pupils of whom 112 are partially deaf and 30 are partially sighted. Classes are small, with approximately three to eight pupils for the children hard of hearing. The students are expected to speak and lipread. They are encouraged to make maximum use of the hearing they have with the help of hearing aids, so that they can take part in oral teaching.

The teachers are specially trained in education for partially deaf and tuition follows the normal syllabus of the Swedish comprehensive school with the appropriate standardised tests.

Characteristics of the innovation project

Two objectives are aimed at:

A. A smoother transition from pre-primary education to primary school for partially deaf and partially sighted children, who are integrated in this school;

To this end, the school admits six year old children for two hours each Wednesday, in order to make them familiarised with their future school, teachers, classmates and school-work style.

B. A better socialisation of handicapped children during the lower cycle of primary school. This aim is pursued through the setting-up of mixed age groups of children (from 7-9 years) who take part daily in workshops devoted to the following themes:

images and forms, games and their regulations, other countries' children, theatre and video, fairy tales and myths, animals.

Financing of the project

The following supplementary means were allotted:

- 1984-85: 70,000 Swedish crowns
- 1985-86: 90,000 Swedish crowns
- 1986-87: 100,000 Swedish crowns

The above means were used to recruit a full-time specialist teacher who takes care of six year old children and helps them in starting the primary cycle, as well as to the vocational training of the teachers concerned. Within the framework of the follow-up to the project, the teachers expressed the wish to see this supplementary budgetary post become permanent.

Development of the project

The educational team, directed by Kristina UNDEN-THORSELL, teacher in this school, undertook the project with enthusiasm in order to ensure its success. The school's headmaster does not seem to have played a leading role in the project.

The whole team, however, have devoted all their energies to the implementation of the project and have overcome the few problems with which they were confronted (such as duration of the workshop's sittings; schedule).

Evaluation of the project

A yearly assessment - neither published nor disseminated - was carried out and the overall evaluation will take place at the end of the project. However, the teachers concerned gave us their first conclusions:

- the part-time integration of the six year old children in this school is highly beneficial to their adaptation to the following year;

- co-operation amongst pupils has developed;

- each teacher feels more responsible for all the pupils of the school.

No role was played by the parents, neither in the elaboration nor in the implementation of the project.

5.2 WORKING GROUP 2

School visited: EKENSBERGSSKOLAN

Rapporteur: Prof. Jean-Pierre OESTREICHER

The school was built on a site where there was once shipbuilding yards.

Opened in 1981 for 100 pupils, there are, in fact, 77 pupils in four mixed classes (1-2-3). The school is part of a group of four, with 1,100 pupils, including 200 "foreigners". Only one of these schools has the three stages (123/456/789).

The school has a leisure centre attached. It is open from 6.30 am to 6.30 pm and can cater for 40 children. The staff consist of 12, four of whom are teachers, and also part-time staff including a psychologist, a speech therapist, a nurse, and specialist teachers. 240 families live around the school. The catchment area is middle-class with some problem cases. The children eat their lunch and snacks in the canteen; they help with the canteen; the washing up and the cleaning. Everything about the school is spacious; the facilities and equipment are exemplary. There is everything needed for modern education: the best possible use is made of space and everything is specially designed for children. Access is guaranteed for handicapped children.

Main aims in the socio-affective field

a. Education in a sense of shares responsibility.

b. Education in mutual assistance between children and between children and adults.

c. Development of each child's abilities in the mixed group with a large and committed staff.

d. Creation of well-being stimulating the growth of active processes.

Reason for innovation?

1. Permanent direct co-operation between the leisure centre and the school.

2. Large staff, making it possible to cater for each child and work co-operatively while taking account of each child's development.

3. Best possible conditions for mutual improvement.

4. The younger children's period of adjustment is dealt with more satisfactorily.

Criticism from outside school

- There is too much dispersal, creating a bad impression.

- A certain lack of concentration on the part of the children.

- Not enough parental responsibility.

With regard to the cognitive sphere, there is a curriculum stating the aims pursued and the "possible" methods. Reference is made to it, but the teachers' freedom to interpret the curriculum is very great. The textbooks, if used, are interesting and for the most part suitable.

Problems arising for the innovation

- Little precision as to the particular aims pursued.

- Transition to the fourth year: the older children have no reference group.

Advantages of the innovation

- Good integration into the school environment.

- The children have confidence in themselves.

- A friendly atmosphere.

- A wide range of school and extra-curricula activities.

Weaknesses recognised to some extent by the staff:

- Lack of interest on the part of the parents.

- Not enough parental responsibility.

- Lack of cohesion among teaching staff.

- Lack of teacher-training.

- Continuity in the fourth year.

- Co-operation between two different ministries.

Open questions

1. Unclear school structures.

2. Pragmatic project development and implementation without any theoretical frame of reference.

3. Role played by the inspector and by the supervisor.

4. Dissemination and "multiplication" of the project.

5. Acquisition of basic knowledge -

   - is it sufficient?

   - may raise a problem in the fourth year;

   - English is not introduced until the fourth year.

EVALUATION

1. Director's role

   Positive, fully involved in the experiment; the idea was accepted by all teachers; the director would be reluctant to enhance different innovations.

2. Difficulties

   Solved by common agreement; periodical discussion; curriculum development by the whole teaching staff; continuity in the latter.

3. Involvement

   Very high as concerns the team, but mainly pragmatic. Such an involvement is essential for continuing the innovation experiment.

4. Resources

   Considerable, both as regards material means and staff (12 teachers for 100 pupils); co-operation between school and leisure centre as well as between two different departments.

5. Success

   This innovation proved undoubtedly to be a success from the socio-emotional viewpoint. But it is questionable as regards learning, in particular for senior pupils who enter the "fourth" form.

6. Dissemination

Simple wording of detailed curricula -

Director highly involved

One person is entrusted with the study of ways and means of better dissemination.

Teacher-training should take suggested model into account.

7. Parents

Low involvement, generally speaking.

Pupils are interested, but since their interest is oriented in various directions, this might result in a lack of concentration.

8. Consultants

Either non-existent or far away. But should this not be the role of an inspector, in his/her capacity as educational adviser?

5.3 WORKING GROUP 3

School visited: KARLBERGSSKOLAN

Rapporteur: Mrs Birte Kjaer JENSEN

The school has total integration between school activities and leisure centre activities. It is one of four schools in a so-called management district, and is at present attended by about 50 children from the ages of seven to nine. The school was built quite recently as part of an ordinary apartment building which - together with two or three others - form the "official" total area of the school. The children started in August 1986, and by August 1987 it will be attended by its full quota of pupils, which is 75 seven to nine-year olds with a staff of 14.

The facilities of the school are quite impressive with a central "activity room", three classrooms, nine group rooms, and a workshop with facilities for woodwork, photography and ceramics; three kitchens and a gymnasium.

The staff of 14 are teachers, recreation instructors and people who clean and cook. This group of adults all work together to create one environment for the children.

Each class is made up of pupils of different ages. The "mixed age class" gives the children social training, and the well-established norm-system of such a class can be preserved from one year to the next, as only one-third of the class moves on to a different school each year.

The social training might be observed at lunchtime - much was eaten in a very relaxed atmosphere and the children were ready to observe each other's needs and to respond to them.

The children have a role to play in the planning of their work - among other things, there is a weekly meeting with an agenda agreed on at the previous meeting. Each child may plan his/her assignments during the week, and every day ends with a half-hour evaluation of the day's work based on diaries kept by each child.

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The role of the head-teacher

The leadership of the school might be seen as being made up of a co-ordinator (educated as a recreation instructor) and a teacher ("junior school teacher"). This kind of leadership could be characterised as informal, and its role is to inspire, encourage, and create an atmosphere of security for both staff and pupils, and an atmosphere where curriculum change was encouraged.

Problem-solving

The school was so new and its staff so enthusiastic that no real structures had been created for solving problems. At this stage, problems were discussed and solved in meetings attended by the entire staff.

Why change?

The staff felt a need to work together. They had experienced loneliness at their former schools, and they found a reward in team-teaching and in the support obtained from one another when adopting this "style" of working.

Resources

The school was built with money from two sources:

- the social department
- the school administration

and all initial costs were shared. Since the resources were pooled, they went a long way. The staff had some influence in the way the money was spent on equipment, and displayed a very imaginative approach. The greatest part of the money has been spent on materials encouraging creativity.

Evidence of success

For the next five years, the school will be evaluated by the University of Stockholm. The researcher comes in once a week and talks to parents, pupils and staff. So far, everyone has expressed satisfaction with the work of the school.

Since the school is so young, there can be no evaluation, for instance, of test results, and the question is whether that kind of comparison of test results would prove anything. Is it at all possible to prove that one system works better than another? Perhaps you just have to trust your own instinct. If the atmosphere of the school is a happy one, you may be certain that the learning is successful.

Dissemination

The school is not responsible for disseminating its results, but it can be regarded as a pilot-school set up by the authorities of Stockholm. In order to initiate innovation, you have to show what you can do - not just lecture about possible changes. This school has had visitors from almost everywhere in the world but its three neighbouring schools. That will be remedied next year, when a programme for teachers from the area visiting the school will be set up.

The role of parents, pupils, etc.

There is an elected group of parents who prepare a monthly meeting. The agenda is decided by the parents, and the school staff take part in discussions about the work in the school.

However, perhaps the informal parent participation is even more important. Parents very often take their children to school and take the opportunity of discussing the school and the children with the staff.

Possible points for discussion

- The possible connection between in-service training, external advisers and the initiation of change.

- The connection between structural innovation and curriculum changes.

5.4 WORKING GROUP 4

School visited: VASTBODASKOLAN

Rapporteur: Mr M.J. CATON

1. The junior school

a. This is a six class school whose head is responsible for three schools. The group observed a drama lesson with a half class of seven year olds (9 children). They were participating in rhyming and word games with actions and in improvising a story read to them by the teacher.

The aims were to stimulate children's interest in and understanding of a story, so making its reading more meaningful, and to develop their abilities to concentrate and co-operate.

b. Key issues

i. The head is described by his staff as "unafraid to listen to new ideas". Staff decided collectively that they wished to take part and they chose drama which they saw as a support for language development and for which they had not been well trained. A work plan and estimated costing was prepared. Funding was crucial.

ii. The head's openness and relationship with the staff and the engagement of a respected consultant appear to have prevented difficulties.

iii. The school had already developed a successful home/school reading scheme. Staff are well disposed to innovation and wish to develop the drama project beyond the time when it will attract financial support.

iv. No extra resources were required. The 13,000 kroner granted have necessarily been used to pay the consultant.

v. It is too early to evaluate success (six months) though staff feel successful.

vi. The project will be disseminated through discussions at meetings with colleagues from other schools and through a written report.

vii. Parents have been involved in the home/school reading scheme and have been informed of the drama project.

viii. The consultant organised in-service education for the teachers using them as her class. She followed this by working with each class for a total of six hours with individual teachers observing.

2. <u>The pre-primary and day centres</u>

a. Both are involved in a project contributing to language development and leading to children learning to read. With the junior school they were invited to participate by the national boards. Two junior school teachers act as consultants.

b. In the pre-primary a mixed age group matched photographs with their names, listened to a story illustrated with a picture, and sang songs. Later the five 6-year olds helped the teacher compile a list of words beginning with 'v' and drew a picture. This they discussed with the teacher who wrote down relevant sentences and then read them with the child concerned. At the day centre five 6-year olds played a card game to practise letter sounds, matched words and pictures, and contributed to the composition of rhymes based them.

c. Key issues

i. The head of the pre-primary has worked in the junior school, knows her colleagues well and can act as a mediator. Liaison seems good and the junior school head is greeted as a friend.

ii. No major difficulties have occurred.

iii. Teachers are committed. They make materials and the encouragement of parents and the funding have helped.

iv. The grant (100,000 kroner) has been used to release consultants for a day a week; to pay teachers for attending evening meetings; to purchase teaching aids.

v. After the first year over half the children transferring to the junior school had learned to read through the various activities. Pre-primary teachers understand their role in this process.

vi. Dissemination will be through a written report. The pre-primary head will introduce the project to other areas.

vii. Parents are enthusiastic.

viii. Consultants have given - and continue to give - training to pre-primary teachers (1). They spend a day a week working alongside pre-primary colleagues. Both work in three establishments visiting each approximately once a month.

5.5 WORKING GROUP 5

School visited: KUNGSSATRASKOLAN

Rapporteur: Mr Patrick LAVIN

Group leader: Mr Uno TUVESSON

Title: CHILD HAS A HUNDRED LANGUAGES

This project was undertaken at Kungssatraskolan, which is situated outside Stockholm in a socially mixed community catering for a number of immigrant Turkish families. The school building is 25 years old and accommodates 11 classes of approximately 20 pupils each. Teachers in the school saw the need to expand their work in the area of art/music, formulated a project, asked for and received finance from the Educational Authority in Stockholm County for a three-year project, the aim of which was:

(1) One has had a book published about the methods used.

To give the children the possibility to develop their minds in different ways, to believe in themselves and to increase their self-confidence.

We as a group visited the school, observed the project and came to the following conclusions:

1. Role of the Principal

The project undertaken at Kungssatraskolan seems to have fitted in easily with a desire felt for some time in the school to correct an imbalance perceived to exist in the curriculum, in that too great an emphasis had been placed on the acquisition by the children of basic literacy and numeracy skills and too little on emotional development and on creativity. This imbalance seems to have been recognised and discussed by the Principal and staff jointly. To this extent the Principal had a vital role to play in the innovation. The project itself, however, was the brainchild of members of the staff, possibly of one member of staff, the others supporting and concurring to a greater or lesser extent, but none opposing. The Principal simply liked the project, recognised the teachers' enthusiasm for it and allowed it to proceed.

2. How to resolve difficulties occurring in the innovation?

It appears that the innovation at Kungssatraskolan was supported by all members of staff. It appears also that parents accepted the innovation and placed no obstacle in its way. The Educational Authority in Stockholm County also supported the innovation with finance and advice. Teachers in the local pre-primary, however, were not involved and a discontinuity appeared between pre-primary and primary school, which was not resolved. Teachers involved in the innovation saw lack of time as a difficulty in that work objectives were sometimes hard to attain in the course of a class period or of a school day. When asked if they sometimes tired of the project during its three-year duration, teachers said that they supported each other on such occasions and that it was felt that another teacher could take over the project if the teacher concerned so wished.

3. The emphasis on commitment.

The fact that teachers felt ready to sustain each other in the innovation and to take over from a colleague if necessary, suggests a high degree of commitment on their part. The impression the group got was that some teachers were highly motivated, and that otherwise the general morale was such that all teachers entered upon the innovation in a positive frame of mind.

4. Resources - the better use of existing resources - the imaginative use of resources

The innovation was supported financially by the Educational Authority in Stockholm County to the extent of SEK 40,000 per year or SEK 120,000 in all. The greater proportion of this money was used to pay the salaries of the consultants and the emolument of the teacher who acted as contact person. A small amount was spent on material resources

and a somewhat smaller amount in meeting special needs as they arose. If we accept that a school's main resource is its teaching staff, then it follows that teachers were deployed more imaginatively and to better advantage as a result of this innovation. There was evidence of a healthy reliance on material resources available in the environment and of the recycling of expensive material resources where possible.

5. The evidence for success available to the evaluator

There was a certain lack of clarity here. It seemed to the group that the "creative" aspects of the curriculum, ie art, movement, drama, construction, music etc, had been integrated and placed in a new philosophical framework. Evidence of ongoing development of the innovation into the areas of language and number was less clear. The fact that the teachers continued the innovation beyond year 3, when the grant ceased, indicated that they considered the innovation successful as also does the extension of the innovation in the current year to Grade 4 in the school. The pupils observed by the group during the visit worked with commitment and concentration. How the project related to the totality of the work in the school and how it could extend beyond primary level was unclear.

6. Dissemination - how do the schools see their role?

Dissemination took place both within the school and without. Within the school, teachers informed each other about the innovation, teachers in upper grades visited the project, information was passed on at meetings and in written reports, and the innovation was one of the items discussed by teachers during study days. Without, the Principal informed colleagues during Principals' meetings and the consultant did likewise at a curriculum conference. Local newspapers, when contacted by the school, reported on the innovation.

7. Roles of parents, pupils, officials

a. Parents were informed about the innovation in writing and at parent-teacher meetings and the importance of informing parents was recognised by the school. While parents seem to have accepted the innovation, there is no evidence that they were involved in the decision making or planning and teachers considered that, whatever artistic or other relevant skill they might possess, their lack of pedagogic skill presented an obstacle to their involvement in the classroom.

b. Pupils did not participate in the general decision-making process but were highly motivated.

c. An official of Stockholm County Educational Authority supported the project, as initiated by the teachers, with finance and advice.

8. The role of the consultant

The role of the consultant we met was crucial at all stages of the project up until now. In the first year of the project the consultant educated the teachers who, it seems, worked independently in the classroom in the second and in the third year.

5.6 WORKING GROUP 6

School visited: FRUÄNGSSKOLAN

Rapporteur: Mr Gerard H. van den HOVEN

The Fruängsskolan includes junior, intermediate and senior levels. About 450 pupils are attending the school, about 90 people are engaged by the school as teachers, leisure centre personnel, aides, kitchen personnel etc.

The school exists in four buildings and is constructed on an undulating terrain. The playground is very large and gives the children space to play and meet each other.

The school buildings are rather old and not very attractive for the children.

In October 1984 personnel of the pre-primary, the leisure centre and the day nursery discussed the transition of the children from pre-primary to junior level. The result was an induction programme. The aims of the programme are to:

- socialise the children with each other because they come from different nursery schools;
- make the children familiar with the new environment;
- make the children familiar with the new teachers and leisure centre personnel.

The idea was initiated by the leisure centre personnel and in particular by one of the staff (Ulla).

The programme was worked out in a practical way. Twice a week the children met (one day in the classroom and one day in the gymnasium). The length of the programme was 12 weeks.

In the classroom they draw, paint, play games. In the gymnasium they train their mobility, their awareness of room and body, dance and play "learn-to-know-each-other-games".

Furthermore, they become familiar with the regulations of the junior level (putting hands up before answering teachers' questions).

During the visit, we observed that 22 children and two adults were doing games in the gymnasium. Nine children and four adults (two pre-primary teachers and two people from the leisure centre) were working in the classroom. We also visited the leisure centre.

We passed by a second grade class; visited an intermediate level grade and discussed with the pupils of the ninth grade their attitudes to school.

Discussing the visit we felt that the initiative of the induction programme was an isolated project, carried out only by the people who are directly involved with the children. We had the impression that a stimulating role of the Principal of the school was missing. According to the information the people involved gave us, it is a rather successful project. We felt that the attitude of the leisure centre people, which we saw in practice at the little zoo and in the centre, was at variance from the way the programme was carried out at the primary level.

It would have been very fruitful if the programme had been followed/monitored very carefully by a consultant or an advisor. In particular, further discussions about the pedagogical and didactical impact of the programme would have given chances to reinforce the strong points of the innovation.

More generally, we felt that the relations between the Swedish teachers and the pupils were supportive. Self-confidence and a positive attitude were observed as part of the climate at the Fruängsskolan. The integrated school day, the use by the children themselves of the leisure centre, the lunch provided by the school were all aspects leading to this climate.

The group came to the conclusion that the small innovation in this school can have a larger impact if external support could be brought in to monitor the development and take away the barriers which exist between the three participating groups so that the innovation would extend to the whole school, and not just those involved in the transition between the pre-primary and the junior phase.

6. Rapporteurs' general summary: conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Introduction: Summary of recent developments in school-based innovation

The Council of Europe Project No. 8 has established a position on the characteristics of successful innovation. This position has rejected the rigid polarisation of school-based innovations and those initiated by central government in accordance with some national goal. It has recognised that school-based innovation can have great advantages, in terms of the commitment of teachers to change, but can also result in innovations which may later prove to be barriers to national programmes of change. The project therefore has advocated approaches which allow teachers considerable autonomy in terms of decision making during the process of innovation, while at the same time operating these initiatives within some form of national framework.

The present conference has focused the attempt by the Swedish Educational Authority to cope with the dilemmas resulting in implementation of innovation along these lines. During the last 30 years, as reported by Peter HONETH, the Swedish system has undergone much structural change in moving from a traditional programme where all students attended compulsory school from 7-14 years, to one in which the age of leaving was raised to 16. Whereas in the former system only some 25% went on to further education, the figure now is 90% (although this is in part accounted for by the fact that there are few job opportunities for 16 year olds).

Certain successes can be claimed by these structural changes. A large proportion of students adapt well to the system (perform well on tests and work diligently). Schools are distributed geographically so that only a small proportion of the school population do not attend a neighbourhood school where they can travel from home each day.

Problems still remain. A number of pupils (10-15%) still do not adapt to the existing school system. Research has indicated that in subject areas such as science, pupils are not well motivated by the teaching they receive. Their knowledge of science does not change appreciably as a result of the course. It has also been found that it is not possible to produce changes in pedagogy at school level as the result of national initiatives. Many teachers have a poor self-image, low morale and as a result are suspicious, and sometimes hostile to the dictates of central authority.

Mr HONETH set out certain principles which characterised the strategy for gaining the co-operation of teachers in attempting to bring about changes in existing pedagogy. These attempted

a. to create a positive climate whereby teachers feel they are valued by the community and that their ideas make an important contribution to the improvement of the school system;

b. to control the pace of change so that the apparent demands upon teachers are not so great that they induce opposition to innovation and produce a situation of conflict;

c. to develop the quality of leadership at various levels within the system with clear specification of the responsibilities at each level;

d. to make use of Teacher Education as a strategic factor in the process of innovation;

e. to promote staff development coupled with evaluation of any suggested changes in practice.

These principles can be seen to be embodied in the development project for primary level education in Sweden. Whereas in conventional in-service programmes money is generally distributed evenly across all schools, here only institutions which applied for the resources and whose ideas were in accord with the principles laid down by the central authority received grants. Regional authorities also have responsibilities in this matter in that they ultimately decide between the competing claims of different schools. Teachers and schools felt valued because their ideas and efforts received a tangible recognition of additional (although modest) resourcing and schools had autonomy in deciding how these additional resources should be deployed.

The same principle was taken a step further in Denmark where no tradition of centralised school developing work exists. Teachers initiated, carried out and evaluated new programmes. Teachers were paid for the additional work involved in compiling reports of their work and there was additional financial support for copies of this report. A small number of consultants were available to support the teachers in compiling the data upon which these reports were based. Reports, relating to a particular theme, were evaluated and a synthesis provided to the Ministry as an aid to future policy making. It was claimed that the main advantage of this decentralised development work was that when it can be used as a basis of new policy initiatives, these reforms have been introduced more or less without the opposition of teachers who were required to implement proposed changes.

6.2 Some issues related to the ideas developed by Project No. 8

Visits to the local schools certainly appeared to support the view that innovation when initiated at local level raised the enthusiasm of teachers and resulted in more positive attitudes towards their work and in greater self-esteem. But several issues emerge from these visits and also from the various presentations which were given by speakers during the first two days of the seminar.

i. Equality of opportunity and teacher autonomy

If teacher autonomy, as suggested by Ms Winnie GRØNSVED, is the key to teacher commitment and acceptance of change, then the more control teachers are given in deciding the nature and the methods of innovation, the greater the differences which will develop between schools and therefore the greater the different experiences of children. The concern for equality of opportunity is an important objective of most school systems and as the paper by Jean-Michel SIVIRINE suggested, is often a factor which prompts the central authority to retain a major influence in the innovation process. The evaluation study of the different experiences of the Swedish "Junior Level Drive" suggested that many of the projects reflected organisational differences (eg co-operation between pre-primary and junior level) and the examples cited by Ms GRØNSVED concerned practical matters. Studies of teacher "action research" programmes in the United Kingdom also tend to concentrate on topics which in themselves do not give rise to serious concern over inequality because one school makes certain changes. But from the paper presented by Dr JOHANSSON, more serious issues arise. If it is accepted that the difference in language and mathematic scores between the experimental "multicultural-taught groups" and the control groups were real and not an artefact of the effect whereby all experimental groups initially improve performance whatever the change, then should the teacher in the film be allowed to exercise his autonomy and be permitted to operate the more traditional mono-cultural curriculum? Is it sufficient to allow teachers the choice of teaching method in such a case?

A second issue to effect equality between school concerns the distribution of resources. If only those schools which applied and produced successful ideas of innovation received additional resources, then how far can this process of "natural selection" be allowed to continue? In some local authorities in the United Kingdom recent

research has shown that the resourcing of different schools varied by 10 times as much in one school as in another. Careful monitoring of these findings is required to ensure a reasonable balance between encouraging innovation and providing resources for development in other schools. Authorities used to consider what should be done about a school which never applied for money to carry out innovation.

ii. Generalisability of local innovations

Most local innovations, as has been shown at the conference, tend to be of a "problem-solving" nature. The school or a group of teachers identify a particular problem (eg better continuity between the pre-primary and the junior level, producing suitable curriculum materials for a vertically grouped class, or planning a project). These are important changes for teachers and they go through the cycle of planning, trying out, evaluating and modifying with enthusiasm.

But research has clearly shown that such "problem-solving" activities rarely bring about changes in classroom practice. For example, in one of the school visited where a link between the pre-primary and the first grade junior class had been set up, the observed practice in the induction sessions in the pre-primary tended to reinforce behaviour that would create greater discipline problems for the first grade teacher in the following year.

Further, the mass of data available from classroom research on questions of pedagogy suggests that these are key issues when attempting to move pedagogy in the direction required in the Swedish programme to do with ways of enforcing classroom control, questioning and providing feedback on pupils' work. Yet these issues were rarely chosen as the subject of innovation projects and that would be true of school-based work in the United Kingdom and other countries where similar programmes exist. Several reasons may be advanced for this:

(a) The 'perception' gap in teaching

Many studies have shown that a teacher's perception of classroom practice will often differ considerably from that of an outside observer. Teachers explain their behaviour largely in terms of external factors which they are required to cope with (difficult pupils, lack of recourses, parental pressures, etc). Outside observers such as those in an authority charged with bringing about innovation, often interpret teachers' reluctance to introduce methods concerned with greater pupil participation in terms of a teacher's personal need to dominate the learning environment. If schools and teachers pursue programmes of innovation in isolation, they are likely therefore to concentrate on ways of coping with external factors rather than exploring their own personal attitudes and beliefs. Hence the importance of consultants within innovation programmes who, if skilfully trained, can help to bridge this perception gap.

(b) The lack of helpful pedagogic language to discuss practice

The whole debate on teaching makes use of a range of concepts which are badly defined and often misunderstood. To give one example, those opposed to informal methods often interpret 'pupil autonomy' as equivalent to anarchy whereby a pupil is free to do exactly as he or she wishes.

In the same way the traditional progressive dichotomy is conceived in terms of simplistic differences, often to do with whether pupils sit in groups or in rows and whether the curriculum is integrated or whether it consists of timetabled subjects. It was noticeable, for example, in the film shown by Dr. JOHANSSON, that the teacher who did not wish to use the project's teaching methods, and who claimed that he was 'more traditional', was unable to explain what this meant, even when asked several times by the interviewer. Similar responses would be given by teachers in most European countries. Unless the language we use to define important pedagogic concepts is clear, then it is impossible to be certain that those participating in the innovating process are ascribing similar meanings when they use similar language.

(c) The lack of theoretical models of teaching

Dr JOHANSSON again made the point that within his action research programme a theoretical model was needed in order that teachers would understand the innovation process. Although traditional forms of pedagogy have been well served by behaviouristic models borrowed from psychology and from 'direct instruction', models derived from empirical research, there is a severe shortage of theoretical perspectives to help teachers develop insights into informal approaches to learning. There are signs, however, that this defect is now being remedied, providing a framework in which teachers can make sense of their observations.

(d) The professional 'reality' of being a teacher

Recent research has also begun to identify the characteristics by which teachers come to recognise themselves as efficient practitioners. Chief amongst these attributes is the ability to 'maintain control'. It follows, therefore, that any innovation, seeking as it does to promote change, requires that teachers risk 'losing control', particularly during the period when pupils try to 'test' out the new procedures in order to discover the rules of the new learning environment. Teachers need help in understanding the mechanism of the innovation process so they accept such situations without feeling a loss of professional self-esteem.

These considerations lead us to place considerable emphasis on the need for evaluation by means of observation during the innovation process, the need for adequate training and the development of supportive roles by the participants and consultants connected with the innovation.

iii. Evaluation

Because of the points raised in section 2, it becomes clear that evaluation is a key to helping teachers move from projects which look at what Hilda TABA terms strategic pedagogic decisions such as the organisation of groups within the class or the development of curriculum materials, to the study of the tactics used by teachers when using these materials or working with these groups. At this tactical level there is a need to check one's own perception against that of other participants involved in the action. These can be colleagues, pupils or external consultants. The use of a variety of simple methods of observation,

triangulation and projective techniques can all be used to improve the quality of the data collected and are preferable in many cases to the much misused questionnaire approach or attitude inventory. But some training is necessary for these methods to be used effectively. Furthermore, there is often a reluctance on the part of some teachers to engage in observation since, by tradition, once training has been completed many teachers never see another teacher teach or are themselves seen teaching by another teacher. We need to consider the kind of incentives necessary to persuade evaluations of this kind to become more widespread.

iv. Training

One of the important outcomes of innovation at local level is that it requires teachers to co-operate. Yet in most countries today very little emphasis is placed during training teachers on working collaboratively. Student teachers take courses as a group and then go into schools to practice their craft under the supervision of an experienced teacher. It is rare for this teacher later to work alongside the student, sharing in the planning and evaluation of the lessons. We know also, from research, that students model their future practice largely on the examples of the teachers they work under during these periods of supervision. Another important influence is their own experience as a pupil in the primary school. Since to become a teacher one must, by definition, have been a successful pupil, there is often little sympathy for those children who tend to be unsuccessful when taught by these methods. It does not take long for student teachers to accept the view that such pupils are "naughty' children who, because of "poor home background" or "inability to concentrate" are likely to fail - we all know about the effect of such teacher expectations.

In this situation, therefore, new programmes for training teachers, no matter how much they encourage students to adopt new methods, are likely to prove ineffective. Students will adopt the practice of existing teachers and justify this by saying that those responsible for their training "are out of touch with reality". Here, therefore, the credibility of those who train teachers is also on trial.

We need therefore to develop training programmes where

a. the trainer, the student (or better, group of students) and the supervising teacher can work collaboratively in the classroom on "problem-solving" activities so that theory and practice can be closely integrated;

b. as part of this process, each of the parties will take turns to teach and observe, using appropriate evaluation techniques.

Using this model we can attempt to induct new teachers successfully and change the practices of experienced teachers also.

v. The roles of various participants (advisers, head-teachers, parents)

Ms ALLGULANDER provided us with an insightful analysis of the expectations of various actors in the innovation process. We noted the important role of parents who often had positive attitudes to school but preferred to see the use of the same teaching methods they experienced as children. Parental participation in school was desirable to overcome these reservations. Further information on the roles of the various participants in the innovation process can be obtained from the group discussions resulting from our visits to schools in the Stockholm district.

vi. The role of consultants

The reports of the working groups support the views established earlier from the responses of the contact schools, that a consultant is a valuable resource in any innovation. Consultants, if skilled and responsive to teachers' needs, can help to reduce the "perception gap", help to elicit the theories and values which support practice and develop meaningful discourse between the participants. The role of the consultant is to respond to the teachers' needs and some individuals are not always temperamentally suited to a role which allows the teachers to retain control of the decision-making process throughout the project. In the paper presented to us by Mr JOHANSSON, we saw him perform these consultant functions. As you will remember in his talk, he insisted on the need to make explicit a theory of learning against which teachers could evaluate their curriculum schemes and it was clear, from the accompanying film, that the teachers valued the opportunity to discuss with the consultant their results.

However, the role of the consultant is very demanding. At any one time a consultant can probably become closely involved with no more than a handful of schools. It is helpful also if the consultant can be seen to be "neutral" with respect to the teacher's career, particularly in that crucial and stressful period when teachers are rethinking their philosophy. For this reason the use of inspectors as consultants is not always the best solution, and the same problem exists when senior staff from within the school are used. One alternative can be found in the report of the Zeeland Regional Pedagogic Centre, directed by Dook KOPMELS. In the United Kingdom, many local authorities have developed teams of consultant "advisory" teachers to help with this work, but such teams need training in the "social" skills required for this task.

6.3 Dissemination

Dissemination is a problem with small local innovations. Teachers do find it difficult to sit down and write accounts of their work, but are more often prepared to run workshops for colleagues in other schools. Running workshops is an excellent way to extend the notion of a teacher's "professionalism". The practice existing in Denmark whereby a central agency co-ordinates and distributes project reports on similar themes and where teachers are paid a small sum to produce a written document seems an admirable one.

6.4 Conclusion

Our work here has shown the value of locally initiated innovation, particularly when it is actively supported by head-teachers and consultants. A crucial factor in such work is the willingness of the Educational Authority to give control of the finance for such projects to the school and to its teachers. We believe this expenditure is fully justified because of the importance of the task. We can do no better than end with a quotation by Jean-Pierre CHEVENEMENT, which was pinned on the door of the teacher's classroom that we visited:

> "The teaching profession is a beautiful one. Into the hands of teachers we place the future ... our children".

7. Closure of the conference

7.1 Concluding remarks from the Swedish authority

The conference was addressed by the Minister for Cultural Affairs and Comprehensive Schools, Mr Bengt GÖRANSSON, who warmly thanked participants for their work and promised that the conclusions and recommendations of the various study groups would be most carefully considered.

The Minister then proceeded to set out the characteristics of a 'good' school. First, it must give its pupils personal competence, not only in the basic skills of arithmetic, reading and writing, but also the fundamental capacity for listening and trying to see the logic of things in coming to terms with the outside world. Secondly, a good school must give its pupils human competence so that every pupil became a participant in our common cultural heritage. Thirdly, a good school must give pupils civic competence so that pupils had a factual knowledge of the life of the community and a practical familiarity with it. Fourthly, a good school must acquaint its pupils with the employment sector so that they could develop professional competence. The acquisition of these four competences meant that pupils needed not only to acquire knowledge but also to learn to handle the knowledge they had acquired. These tasks were the responsibility of the schools and the pupils but the assumption of this responsibility carried with it a considerable degree of independence. Schools had to work within a framework of politically defined objectives but the means whereby these objectives were pursued was a matter for each individual school to decide for itself. Schools could not be managed by detailed regulation of their activity. If schools, therefore, were to be independent it was necessary to decide clearly what tasks were encumbent on the school authorities and which devolved to the head-teachers and the teaching staff. The discussions which had taken place during this conference were a helpful element in this important debate.

7.2 Closing statement on behalf of the Council of Europe

Ms Giulia PODESTÀ, speaking on behalf of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, expressed the thanks of the participants in the symposium, to the Minister and to the Swedish Government for the delightful hospitality enjoyed during the conference. The ideas which the Minister had developed in his speech received the warm support of all delegates and were a central concern of the project.

APPENDIX A

PROGRAMME

Sunday 26 April		
Afternoon	Arrival of participants Registration as from 17h00	
18h00 - 20h00	Dinner	
Monday 27 April		
09h00	Pupils from the Municipal School of Music	
09h30	Opening of the symposium	Mr Erland RINGBORG Director General National Board of Education
10h00	The primary education development project - background and motives, governmental strategy	Mr Peter HONETH Assistant Under-Secretary
10h45	Coffee break	
11h15	Regional measures and co-operation between NBE and the County Education Committees	Ms Ingrid SÖRLIN Principal Administrative Officer
12h30	Lunch	
14h30	Local inputs Discussion and question-and-answer time	Mr Uno TUVESSON Head-teacher Ms Kerstin ALLGULANDER Adviser
16h00	Coffee break	
16h30	Evaluation of the development project	Ms Inger ANDERSSON Ph.D
17h30	Innovation in primary education in the Danish school system	Ms Winnie GRØNSVED Adviser
19h00 (approx.)	Reception	
19h30	Dinner	

Tuesday 28 April

09h00	Innovation in primary education in the French school system	M. Jean-Michel SIVIRINE Inspecteur d'Académie de l'Essonne
10h00	Co-operation between pre-school and school sectors	Ms Gertrud SCHYL-BJURMAN Ph.D
10h30	Coffee break	
11h00	Discussion and question-and-answer time	
12h30	Lunch	
14h30	Language learning at primary level	Mr Henning JOHANSSON Ph.D
	Discussion and question-and-answer time	
16h00	Coffee break	
16h30	The seven schools to be visited introduce themselves. Setting-up of seven working groups, each of which will appoint a rapporteur	
17h45 (approx.)	End of plenary sitting	
19h30	Visit to Stockholm City Hall Buffet Sightseeing on the way	

Wednesday 29 April

08h30	Departure by coach for schools to be visited
09h00	Field trips to seven schools. Each working group will include a representative of the National Board of Education, the Municipality or the County Education Committee
	Lunch at the schools
15h30	Coffee at Hässelby Slott
16h00	Group discussions based in particular on impressions from the schools visited
18h00	End of group work
19h00	Official dinner

Thursday 30 April

09h00	Presentation of working group reports Discussion
10h30	Coffee break
11h00	Continuation of discussion
12h30	Lunch
14h00	Presentation of the draft text by the General Rapporteur
15h00	Conclusion of the symposium
15h30	Coffee break
	Departure

APPENDIX B

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